

Events of Confluence

by Ucaimhu

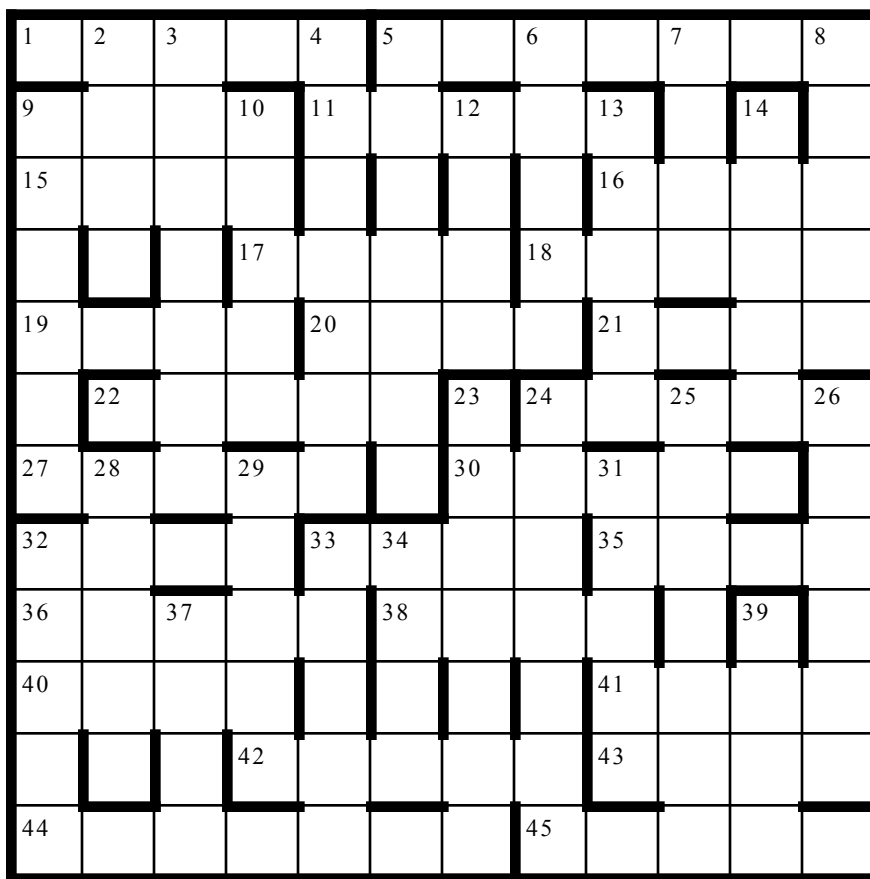
Some items are just determined to flow together. In this puzzle, the Across clues all work normally. However, among the Down clues:

(1) For some clues, a two-letter sequence must be added to the answer before it is entered into the grid. (One of the entries thus formed is a two-word phrase.) Mark these letter pairs in the grid. You can then trace a diagonal path down from the bottom letter of each pair (except the bottom one) to the top letter of another, lower-down pair (crossing over zero, one, or two additional letters in the process), so that each such lower-down pair has two higher-up pairs connecting to it (one from the left and one from the right). When this is done, then reading from each higher-up pair to its lower-down pair along the connecting path will yield a word, and the two words that “flow together” in one lower-down pair will be matched up as befits a certain popular fruit-themed game.

(2) For the rest of the Down clues, answers are entered normally, but each clue has an extra letter that must be removed before solving. Read in clue order, these letters say what you get if you successfully complete the grid and mark all the pairs and paths from (1).

ACROSS

1. Odd topic in work mentioned in a bibliography (2 3, *abbr.*)
5. Virginia’s embracing gal, upsetting underlings (7)
9. Expressions of pleasure, but over-quiet ones (4)
11. I must follow this one desire (5)
15. Loudly lick sticky part of envelope (4)
16. Left comedian Jay with a first-year law student (3 1)
17. Still, I must be a mythical creature (4)
18. Start digging around four, finally (5)
19. For a complicated hairstyle (4)
20. Player’s foot hitting ref’s backside (4)
21. Washington’s enlisting old medicos (4)
22. He names a reddish dye (5)
24. Hide coins in your ear (5)
27. Makes fun of topless women wearing veils (5)
30. Purest on the inside, having good impulses (5)
32. Employed you and me and Mr. Sullivan (4)
33. Five-time film star Miles (4)
35. Live next to a field (4)
36. Egyptian deity with 502 bones (5)
38. Weary little scamp (4)
40. Book with pictures depicting Mr. Simpson (4)
41. Send a news magazine back (4)
42. Last 40% of Pabst beer is not fresh (5)
43. Perversely enthusiastic singer (4)
44. On the radio, wildebeest forgo music like Devo (3 4)
45. Chopped dates, coating sorbet (5)



DOWN

2. Tongue once spoken in India by Alaska’s ex-governor, unbendingly
3. Green vegetable is cold and tough
4. Heard of the state being supported by poles in bars
5. Rival dances like that “Where the Hell is Matt” video
6. *Rent* is not entirely mature
7. Insect takes bait from unscrupulous female relative
8. Female relative is going after insects, finally
9. Just an agricultural exhibition
10. Kid about number six, at first
12. Thin end of that revolving station once seen in *Norbit*
13. Had no arrangement with cone manufacturer in Japan
14. For each agent flip-flopped
23. North American spy group will capture ancient city of gold
24. Raised Padme wrong
25. Ham held by comedian Idle under top of can of clay
26. Characters that start emulating Xena at Camptown track, and bet yon two horses
28. Jacob’s pat answers in gobbledegook [*sic*]
29. Is grasping tentacles on top of the thing
31. Appliance company had test for high school nongraduates (*abbr.*)
32. Wound hart after losing head in the city
33. Credit card company claims Cato’s back in view
34. Where Napoleon was exhibiting competence after getting pup
37. Thug Mr. Cleaver overturned
39. After the start, Livy put in French author’s slangy jargon